People in Canberra and the surrounding region will have better access to health and medical services, when and where they need them, under the Australian Government's new ACT Health Plan.

The ACT Health Plan will significantly strengthen the ACT’s health system, delivering local solutions to local problems.

At the same time, we are ensuring that the ACT shares in the generation-changing reforms, unprecedented funding and improved health outcomes being delivered nationally under our Long Term Health Plan.

The Long Term Health Plan includes additional funding of $594.3 million for public hospitals in Canberra.

Under the ACT Health Plan, we are investing more than $68 million to deliver:

- More mental health care, especially for young people ($9.4 million)
- Drug and alcohol rehabilitation services ($7.9 million)
- New critical hospital infrastructure and services ($19.5 million)
- Lifesaving medical research ($14 million)
- Improved care for senior Australians living in residential aged care ($3.7 million)
- Support for people with eating disorders ($13.5 million)
The Government is committed to ensuring young people in the ACT with mental health issues can access the care that is right for them, where and when they need it.

Youth mental health and suicide prevention ($6 million)

We are providing almost $6 million to help establish the Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Project to support the mental health of young people in the ACT. An Online Youth Navigation Portal will provide personalised online and phone services for young people, their friends and family, and other health professionals. It will consolidate information in one place, to provide a clear and accessible pathway for young people to get the help they need.

The Youth Aware of Mental Health program will be delivered in schools across the ACT to educate and engage young people in discussions about mental health.

headspace ($3.4 million)

We are investing $3.4 million over four years for a new headspace centre in the ACT, in addition to the established centre at Torrens Street, Braddon.

headspace is the Australian Government’s preferred method of service delivery for young people living with mental illness. It provides tailored and holistic mental health support, working closely with young people at a crucial time in their lives to help them get back on track and strengthen their ability to manage their mental health as they go through life. In 2017–18, more than 1,500 young people in Canberra and the region accessed headspace services.

New residential eating disorder clinic ($13.5 million)

Proper treatment of the most severe eating disorders requires 24/7 intensive care. To help deliver this necessary support for the first time in Australia, the Australian Government will provide $13.5 million to establish a residential eating disorder centre in the ACT.

This centre will provide specialist care for people experiencing eating disorders, through in-patient best practice treatment programs. The centre will also help advance the way eating disorders are diagnosed and treated through training, education and advocacy.

Patients will also benefit from our historic $110 million investment in Medicare to provide up to 40 rebatable psychological and 20 dietetic sessions per year for people suffering from an eating disorder.

This commitment to delivering leading medical care in Australia builds on the Government’s many other landmark investments in recognising the devastating impact of eating disorders, including funding for sister residential centres around the country, $4 million for InsideOut Institute to translate evidence into clinical practice, $3 million for the establishment of the National ED Hope helpline, $2.7 million for the National Eating Disorders Collaboration, $3.2 million for a trial of new models of care on the Sunshine Coast, and priority funding through the Million Minds Mission research fund.
Along with the rest of Australia, the ACT’s population is ageing at an unprecedented rate, and providing safe, quality and cost-effective aged care is an ongoing challenge. We are tackling head-on the scourge of drugs and alcohol that is impacting so many individuals, families and communities. As many as 70 per cent of complex chronic mental health patients have alcohol and drug issues.

Aged care

We will provide $3.7 million to support all ACT residential aged care facilities to optimise the safety of senior Australians receiving care and reduce adverse effects related to medication. Pharmacists will be embedded in all 27 residential care facilities in Canberra – with funding for each service to employ a part-time pharmacist to work closely with general practitioners and nursing staff, to ensure the quality use of medicines. These pharmacists will have close linkages with community pharmacy in the surrounding areas.

Senior Australians living in residential aged care services are the highest users of medications. Providing safe and effective medication management is integral to ensuring high quality care and reducing medication-related adverse events, including avoidable hospitalisations.

Quality residential aged care ($3.7 million)

We are continuing to support senior Australians in the ACT to stay living at home for as along possible. Currently more than 1,300 people are receiving a home care package, which provides coordinated care to help them remain at home, where they want to be. This number will continue to grow in line with the Government’s significant investment to deliver more home care packages.

Support at home

Senior Australians in the ACT will also benefit from around $60 million over the next two years provided for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme, which delivers entry level home supports such as meals on wheels, cleaning, gardening and transport.

Drugs and alcohol

This non-residential based withdrawal program will be delivered by Registered Nurses, in partnership with general practitioners and alcohol and other drug services. It will provide support for people with mild to moderate withdrawal symptoms and a safe alternative for people who experience barriers accessing hospital and residential clinics.

Community Withdrawal Support Service ($3.6 million)

We will expand and modernise community-based residential alcohol and other drug rehabilitation services in the ACT ($4.3 million). These services provide a safe, structured and therapeutic environment for people to develop the skills and strategies to make positive life changes. This investment will mean infrastructure upgrades and maintenance, and more rehabilitation beds.

Community-based services ($4.3 million)
Hospitals

The Government is committed to investing in critical hospital infrastructure projects which better equip hospital systems to meet the health care needs of their local communities.

Hospital infrastructure ($13.5 million)

We are providing $13.5 million for the much needed expansion of the Canberra Hospital Intensive Care Unit (ICU). An additional six to eight ICU beds will provide lifesaving care for patients requiring acute medical treatment and intensive care monitoring.

MRI ($6 million)

The Government is ensuring the ACT shares in our national MRI expansion program, which is delivering an unprecedented number of Medicare-eligible MRI services. Canberra will get a new MRI service at Calvary Hospital, Bruce, starting 1 April, with funding of more than $6.0 million. More MRI units allow patients to access Medicare-subsidised lifesaving scans.

Extra hospital funding ($594.3 million)

Under our Long Term Health Plan, we are making significant investment in Australia’s public hospitals. For the ACT, this plan delivers an additional $594.3 million under a new five year funding agreement.

This will deliver thousands of new hospital services to patients across Canberra and the surrounding region.

Medical research

The Government’s commitments to lifesaving health and medical research, supports doctors, nurses and researchers in treating patients and finding new diagnoses, cutting edge treatments and breakthrough cures.

Phenomics research at the Australian National University ($10 million)

Phenomics is the study of how our genes interact with the environment. This is important in understanding the way a disease works, so personalised treatment can be developed for patients.

We are continuing our commitment to research by providing $10 million to the Phenomics Translation Centre at the Australian National University.

This investment will help doctors better understand, prevent and treat complex and chronic diseases as well as debilitating or incurable diseases. It will also provide valuable insight into new drugs, devices and therapies that will transform and save lives.

Preventive health research at the University of Canberra ($4 million)

Our investment of $4 million will support research focusing on better coordinated care for people with chronic and complex disease, and helping them to self-manage their condition, to keep them out of hospital.